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Message Text

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16
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 SS-15 L-03 SR-02 ORM-01 PRS-01

SCA-01 VO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-07 INRE-00 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 DODE-00 FBIE-00 SY-05 INSE-00 /054 W
---------- 122766
O 300900Z JUN 75
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5642
INFO USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T HONG KONG 7331

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: POLITICAL ASYLUM REQUEST OF EX"KMT WAR CRIMINAL"
TUAN KO-WEN

REF: HONG KONG 6239 AND STATE A-6610, AUGUST 20, 1974

1. EX-"KMT WAR CRIMINAL" TUAN KO-WEN (3008/0344/2429) APPROACHED CONGEN JUNE 30 DECLARING HE SEEKS POLITICAL ASYLUM. HE HAD EARLIER EXPRESSED THIS INTENTION PRIVATELY TO JOURNALIST SYDNEY LIU OF NEWSWEEK (SEE REFTEL).

2. WE CONSIDER TUAN CASE TO BE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE BECAUSE A NEGATIVE USG DECISION WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY TAIWAN CONSIDERATIONS. CHINA'S SCHEME OF PERMITTING TUAN AND NINE OTHER RECENTLY AMNESTIED, EX-"KMT WAR CRIMINALS" TO DEPART THE PRC FOR TAIWAN IS PART OF PEKING'S PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE VIS-A-VIS TAIWAN. THE TEN MEN ARRIVED IN HONG KONG FROM CHINA APRIL 14, AND SINCE THEN TAIWAN HAS RIGIDLY RESISTED ACCEPTING THE MEN. HOWEVER, AS THEY AWAITED WORD FROM TAIWAN, THE PRC HAS SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED THE SITUATION WITH CONSIDERABLE FAVORABLE (TO THE PRC) PUBLICITY LOCALLY. IN CONTRAST WITH TAIPEI'S HANDLING OF THE CASE, PEKING'S ACTIONS HAVE APPEARED ESPECIALLY
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MAGNANIMOUS AND HUMANE. THE WIDE PUBLICITY FOLLOWING THE

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RECENT SUICIDE OF ONE OF THE TEN, CHANG TIEH-SHIH, WHO
APPARENTLY DESPAIRED OF BEING PERMITTED TO JOIN HIS RELATIVES
ON TAIWAN, ONLY SERVED TO FURTHER BLACKEN TAIWAN'S IMAGE TO
PEKING'S ADVANTAGE.

3. THE TUAN CASE MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF THE
FACT THAT TUAN, LIKE CHANG , IS ALONE, ELDERLY AND POSSIBLY
FEELS EQUALLY DEJECTED. ALTHOUGH STILL STAYING AT PRC-
PROVIDED ACCOMMODATIONS, HE HAS SOUGHT OUT THE PRESS AND
PRIVATELY EXPRESSED CRITICISM OF BOTH PRC AND TAIWAN AUTHORITIES'
HANDLING OF THE TEN'S CASES.

4. WE CONTEMPLATE CONSIDERABLEPUBLICITY ON THE CASE SHOULD
THE USG RESPOND NEGATIVELY TO HIS REQUEST. TUAN MAY TURN TO
THE PRESS IN HIS DISAPPOINTMENT OR EVEN CONTEMPLATE ACTION
LIKE THAT OF CHANG WHICH WOULD BE BLAMED ON US. DEPARTMENT
SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT SHOULD TUAN BE GRANTED ENTRY, THE
OTHER SEVEN EX-KMT "WAR CRIMINALS" HERE MAY FOLLOW SUIT.
(AN EIGHT MEMBER OF THE GROUP, CHEN SHIN-CHANG, IS THE BENE-
FICIARY OF AN IMMEDIATE RELATIVE IV PETITION, AND CONGEN EXPECTS
THAT HE MAY BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO THE US AS EARLY AS A WEEK
TO TEN DAYS).

5. HKG IS BEING INFORMED ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS OF TUAN'S
REQUEST. WE ANTICIPATE HKG WILL BE RELUCTANT TO HAVE TUAN
REMAIN PERMANENTLY IN HONG KONG AND WOULD PROBABLY ENCOURAGE
US TO PERMIT HIM TO GO TO THE US AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE.
PRESENCE OF FORMER PRISIONERS HAS BEEN AN ACUTE POLITICAL
PROBLEM FOR HKG WHICH HAS COMPLICATED ITS RELATIONS WITH
TAIWAN AND MADE IT AN UNWILLING ACCOMPLICE IN THE PRC'S
PROPAGANDA PLOY.

6. AFTER CONSIDERING THE PROS AND CONS OF ACCEDING TO TUAN'S
REQUEST, WE COME DOWN IN FAVOR OF OFFERING HIM SOME FORM OF
ENTRY INTO THE US. IN ORDER TO AVOID SOME OF THE COMPLICATIONS
ARISING OUT OF STRAIGHTFOWARD GIFT OF POLITICAL ASYLUM, WE
BELIEVE THAT WESHOULD PLACE THIS CASEAS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT AND HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT COULD FIND
SOME SPONSORSHIP TO ACCOMPLISH THIS AIM. HUMANITIARIAN APPROACH
ALSO WOULD SERVE TO PUT MORE PRESSURE ON TAIWAN TO CHANGE
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ITS HARD LINE WHICH IS GIVING THEM SUCH A BLACK EYE. IN ANY
CASE, BELIEVE WE SHOULD MOVE QUICKLY BECAUSE THE LONGER TUAN
STAYS, THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE TO HAVE UNWANTED PUBLICITY
DIRECTED NOTONLY AT TAIWAN BUT AT US "CALLOUSNESS" AS WELL.
WE HAVE TO REALIZE THE PRC IS AIMING AS MAXIMUM PROPAGANDA
ADVANTAGE FROM THESE EIGHT AND WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT THEM
AS LONG AS TAIWAN REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE MEN.

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7. IN ACCORDANCE WITH 2 FAM 228.5 , THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED: (A) TUAN KO-WEN, CHINESE; (B) BORN APRIL 10, 1908 AT ON YUAN, TUEN LIU DISTRICT, KIRIN PROVINCE, CHINA; LAST OCCUPATION AS DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF CHI LIN YUAN IN FEBRUARY 1951, SINCE THEN POW IN CHINA; (C) PRC EXIT PERMIT ISSUED APRIL 13, 1975 WITH PERMIT TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG UNTIL JULY 5 ; (D) WE ARE NOTIFYING HKG CONFIDENTIALLY OF HIS APPLICATION; (E) MR. TUAN CLAIMS HE HAS MADE APPLICATION TO ENTER TAIWAN , BUT HAS NOT HAD ANY REPLY. HE IS UNWILLING TO RETURN TO THE PRC, FEARS HE CANNOT STAY MUCH LONGER IN HONG KONG, AND HAS CHOSEN THE US AS A "FREE COUNTRY"; (F) CURRENTLY LIVING AT THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, HONG KONG, WITH CHINA TRAVEL SERVICES PAYING FOR HIS ROOM; (G) SAME AS E ABOVE; (H) ONLY CHARGE MADE AGAINST MR. TUAN AS MEMBER OF KMT CENTRAL MILITARY COMMITTEE BY THE PRC IN 1951, FOR WHICH HE SPENT THE NEXT 24 YEARS IN PRISION UNTIL HE WAS AMNESTIED EARLIER THIS YEAR; (I) NO COMMUNIST AFFILIATIONS, BUT MR. TUAN WAS PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER IN KMT ARMY FROM GRADUATION FROM CENTRAL MILITARY SCHOOL IN 1936 UNTIL 1947 WHEN HE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE MKT CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

8. MR. TUAN RETURNED TO HIS HOTEL, AFTER REQUESTING THAT HIS APPLICATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. HE INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT WANT US TO CALL HIM AT HIS HOTEL, BUT THAT HE WOULD CALL BACK JULY 3. MR. TUAN IS A WIDOWER. HE HAS ONE SON, STILL IN CHINA, WHO APPARENTLY DENOUNCED HIS FATHER AND WHOM HE HAS NOT SEEN SINCE 1950.
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